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ABSTRACT

This report reveals the results of the seventh annual National Student Satisfaction Study conducted by the Noel-Levitz group to determine areas of highest importance to students, the areas of greatest and least satisfaction, and the greatest performance gaps between levels of importance and levels of satisfaction. It contains data from 1,045 colleges and universities. Student populations by institutional type include: (1) 192,306 from four-year public institutions; (2) 319,346 from four-year private institutions; (3) 242,809 from two-year community, junior, and technical colleges; and (4) 41,067 from career and private schools. The Student Satisfaction Inventory used for this survey covered the full range of college experiences. Student responses are summarized in chart form, showing the differences among students in different types of institution. Participating institutions report that a more complete view of their students' concerns enables them to achieve significant gains in their institution's effectiveness more quickly because they know precisely where to focus their time, money, and effort. Findings indicate that successful institutions tend to share three basic attributes: they focus on the needs of their students, they continually improve the quality of the educational experience, and they use student satisfaction assessment results to shape their future directions. (SLD)

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2001 National Student Satisfaction Report

USA Group Noel-Levitz

2001

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2001 National Student Satisfaction Report

Study Conducted by Noel-Levitz

Rationale for Satisfaction Measurement

Student satisfaction studies are self-examinations that enable institutions to measure their students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences. By taking "soundings" of student satisfaction, institutions are able to pinpoint their institutional strengths as well as areas in need of improvement.

Traditionally, colleges and universities have measured one dimension of student satisfaction only. However, for greatest impact and accuracy, satisfaction should be viewed within the context of student expectations (levels of importance). For example, the availability of parking and the quality of food service repeatedly surface as areas of high dissatisfaction to students. But when asked to indicate the importance of these areas in their overall educational experience, students rate parking and food service relatively low.

The Study

This report reveals the results of the seventh annual National Student Satisfaction Study conducted by Noel-Levitz to determine the areas of highest importance to students, the areas of greatest and least satisfaction, and the greatest performance gaps between levels of importance and levels of satisfaction. This two-dimensional approach uses the Student Satisfaction Inventory™ to identify student concerns that are truly affecting student success. By revealing which aspects of campus students consider most and least important, along with how satisfied students are, this inventory provides a vehicle for institutions to set priorities that are *closely aligned* with those of their students.

Companion Studies

See the final two sections of this report for:

1) a national study that reveals institutional priorities from the perspective of faculty, staff, and administrators with results from 297 institutions
2) a national study that reveals the priorities of adult students with results from 29 institutions

The Source of Data

The 2000 National Student Satisfaction Report represents data from 1,045 colleges and universities representing four-year public, four-year private, two-year community, junior and technical institutions, and two-year career and private schools that utilized the Student Satisfaction Inventory with all or part of their student body.

The student populations by institutional type include 192,306 from four-year publics; 319,346 from four-year privates; 242,809 from two-year community, junior, and technical colleges; and 41,067 from career and private schools.

The Instrument

The Student Satisfaction Inventory, from which the data were collected for this report, consists of over 70 items that cover the full range of college experiences. Each item is expressed as a statement of expectation. Each statement includes a rating scale of 1 to 7. Students are asked to rate the level of importance they assign to the expectation as well as their level of satisfaction that the expectation is being met.

The inventory findings are then presented with three scores for each item: an importance score, a satisfaction score, and a performance gap score, which is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score. A large performance gap score on an item indicates that the institution is not meeting the expectation; a small gap score indicates that the institution is close to meeting the expectation; and a negative gap score indicates that the institution is exceeding the students' expectations.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory comes in three versions: one for four-year institutions; one for community, junior, and technical colleges, and another for two-year career and private schools. A sample of the SSI items representing a broad array of issues relating to campus programs and services is presented at the end of this report.

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What Expectations Are Most Important to Students?

Students were asked to rate the level of importance of each statement of expectation by responding to the question **"How important is it to you that your institution meet this expectation?"** Responses reflect how strongly students felt about the statement, with higher scores reflecting greater student expectations.

The statements of expectation rated as most important by students in the national sample of 1,045 institutions were as follows:

Expectations of Greatest Importance to Students

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. The content of the courses within my major is valuable.
2. The instruction in my major field is excellent.
3. Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
4. The quality of instruction in most classes is excellent.
5. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. The content of the courses within my major is valuable.
2. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
3. The instruction in my major field is excellent.
4. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
5. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.

Community, Junior and Technical Colleges

1. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
2. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
3. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
4. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
5. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.

Career and Private Schools

1. Factor to enroll: Future employment opportunities
2. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
3. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
4. The quality of instruction in the academic programs is excellent.
5. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.

What Expectations Are Most Satisfying to Students?

Students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each statement of expectation by responding to the question **"How satisfied are you that your institution has met this expectation?"** Responses reflect the degree to which students felt their institution was meeting the expectation, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of student satisfaction.

The statements of expectation rated as most satisfying by students in the national sample of 1,045 institutions were as follows:

Expectations With Highest Satisfaction

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
2. This institution has a good reputation within the community.
3. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
4. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
5. My academic advisor is approachable.

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
2. On the whole, the campus is well maintained.
3. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.

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4. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
5. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.

Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges

1. On the whole, the campus is well maintained.
2. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
3. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
4. The quality of instruction in most classes is excellent.
5. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.

Career and Private Schools

1. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
2. The personnel involved in registration are helpful.
3. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
4. My academic advisor is approachable.
5. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.

Where Are Campuses Failing to Meet Students' Expectations?

Performance gap takes into consideration both the importance score and the satisfaction score by generating a discrepancy score. When the students' level of satisfaction (*satisfaction score*) is subtracted from the strength of the students' expectation (*importance score*), the result is a performance gap (*unmet expectation*). A large performance gap score for an item indicates that the institution is not meeting students' expectations. A negative gap score indicates that an institution is exceeding students' expectations for that item.

The statements of expectation with the largest performance gaps as rated by students in the national sample of 1,045 institutions are listed at right. In addition, the importance scores and the corresponding satisfaction scores are presented below the statements to illustrate the merit of a two-dimensional approach to studying the satisfaction levels of students. *Note:* Performance gaps should be considered within the context of importance scores.

Expectations With Greatest Performance Gaps

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. The amount of student parking on campus is adequate. *(importance 5.95 - satisfaction 3.75)*
2. There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. *(importance 5.90 - satisfaction 3.97)*
3. Adequate financial aid is available for most students. *(importance 6.40 - satisfaction 4.67)*
4. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. *(importance 6.47 - satisfaction 4.75)*
5. Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable. *(importance 6.06 - satisfaction 4.40)*

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. The amount of student parking on campus is adequate. *(importance 6.23 - satisfaction 2.85)*
2. I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus. *(importance 6.19 - satisfaction 4.11)*
3. I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts. *(importance 6.54 - satisfaction 4.59)*
4. Adequate financial aid is available for most students. *(importance 6.23 - satisfaction 4.41)*
5. Student activities fees are put to good use. *(importance 6.03 - satisfaction 4.22)*

Community, Junior and Technical Colleges

1. The amount of student parking on campus is adequate. *(importance 6.14 - satisfaction 4.29)*
2. Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class. *(importance 6.16 - satisfaction 4.83)*
3. Financial aid awards are announced in time to students to be helpful in college planning. *(importance 5.95 - satisfaction 4.64)*
4. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure. *(importance 6.13 - satisfaction 4.86)*
5. Adequate financial aid is available for most students. *(importance 6.16 - satisfaction 4.96)*

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Career and Private Schools

1. The amount of student parking is adequate. *(importance 6.09 - satisfaction 4.47)*
2. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure. *(importance 6.12 - satisfaction 4.53)*
3. The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date. *(importance 6.36 - satisfaction 4.80)*
4. Computer labs are adequate and accessible. *(importance 6.29 - satisfaction 4.86)*
5. Library resources and services are adequate. *(importance 6.06 - satisfaction 4.65)*

The Scales

Findings from the Student Satisfaction Inventory were compared to national standards on composite scales by institutional type in the following areas.

- ***Academic Advising Effectiveness** (four-year schools) **and Academic Advising and Counseling Effectiveness** (two-year and career/private schools)* assess the comprehensiveness of the academic advising program, evaluating advisors' knowledge, competence, approachability, and personal concern for students.
- ***Academic Services** (two-year and career/private schools)* assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring and study areas.
- ***Campus Climate*** measures the extent to which the institution provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and belonging.
- ***Campus Life** (four-year schools)* assesses the effectiveness of student life programs offered by the institution, covering issues ranging from athletics to residence life. This scale also assesses campus policies and procedures to determine students' perceptions of their rights and responsibilities.
- ***Campus Support Services*** assesses the quality of support programs and services.
- ***Concern for the Individual*** assesses the institution's commitment to treating each student as an individual. Included in this assessment are those groups who frequently deal with students on a personal level (e.g., faculty, advisors, counselors, residence hall staff).
- ***Instructional Effectiveness*** measures students' academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence.
- ***Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness** (four-year schools) **and Admissions and Financial Aid Effectiveness** (two-year and career/private schools)* measure the extent to which admissions counselors are competent and knowledgeable, along with students' perceptions of the effectiveness and availability of financial aid programs.
- ***Registration Effectiveness*** assesses issues associated with registration and billing and the extent to which the registration process is smooth and effective.
- ***Responsiveness to Diverse Populations*** assesses the institution's commitment to specific groups of students enrolled at the institution (e.g., under-represented populations, students with disabilities, commuters, part-time students, and older, returning learners).
- ***Safety and Security*** measures the institution's responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on the campus.
- ***Service Excellence*** measures the areas of campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably.
- ***Student Centeredness*** measures the institution's attitude toward students and the extent to which they feel welcome and valued.

Analysis of the Scales

The scales provide a more global view of the institutions by grouping items statistically and conceptually into 12 key areas. The following four tables summarize the importance, satisfaction, and performance gap findings for the 12 scales by institution type.

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2000 Scales: *four-year private institutions*

Scale	**Importance Mean**	Satisfaction Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising	**6.29**	5.28	*1.01*
Campus Climate	**6.16**	5.13	*1.03*
Campus Life	**5.69**	4.73	*0.96*
Campus Support Services	**6.03**	5.03	*1.00*
Concern for the Individual	**6.16**	5.12	*1.04*
Instructional Effectiveness	**6.35**	5.28	*1.07*
Recruitment and Financial Aid	**6.14**	4.85	*1.29*
Registration Effectiveness	**6.15**	4.93	*1.22*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	4.94	—
Safety and Security	**6.18**	4.66	*1.52*
Service Excellence	**6.02**	4.95	*1.07*
Student Centeredness	**6.17**	5.22	*0.95*

(7 = very important / very satisfied 1 = not important / not satisfied at all)

2000 Scales: *four-year public institutions*

Scale	**Importance Mean**	Satisfaction Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising	**6.31**	5.05	*1.26*
Campus Climate	**6.05**	4.85	*1.20*
Campus Life	**5.58**	4.66	*0.92*
Campus Support Services	**6.04**	4.97	*1.07*
Concern for the Individual	**6.06**	4.73	*1.33*
Instructional Effectiveness	**6.31**	5.05	*1.26*
Recruitment and Financial Aid	**6.01**	4.57	*1.44*
Registration Effectiveness	**6.16**	4.75	*1.41*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	4.88	—
Safety and Security	**6.27**	4.31	*1.96*
Service Excellence	**5.99**	4.68	*1.31*
Student Centeredness	**6.02**	4.88	*1.14*

(7 = very important / very satisfied 1 = not important / not satisfied at all)

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2000 Scales: *community, junior, and technical colleges*

Scale	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising / Counseling	**6.10**	5.06	*1.04*
Academic Services	**6.01**	5.14	*0.87*
Admissions and Financial Aid	**5.97**	4.95	*1.02*
Campus Climate	**5.93**	5.12	*0.81*
Campus Support Services	**5.40**	4.78	*0.62*
Concern for the Individual	**6.07**	5.08	*0.99*
Instructional Effectiveness	**6.17**	5.26	*0.91*
Registration Effectiveness	**6.12**	5.25	*0.87*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.31	—
Safety and Security	**5.96**	4.78	*1.18*
Service Excellence	**5.91**	5.06	*0.85*
Student Centeredness	**5.92**	5.19	*0.73*

(**7** = very important / very satisfied **1** = not important / not satisfied at all)

2000 Scales: *career and private schools*

Scale	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising / Counseling	**6.16**	5.07	*1.09*
Academic Services	**6.07**	4.78	*1.29*
Admissions and Financial Aid	**6.19**	5.07	*1.12*
Campus Climate	**6.13**	5.13	*1.00*
Campus Support Services	**5.61**	4.68	*0.93*
Concern for the Individual	**6.20**	5.08	*1.12*
Instructional Effectiveness	**6.26**	5.24	*1.02*
Registration Effectiveness	**6.16**	5.23	*0.93*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.23	—
Safety and Security	**5.96**	4.62	*1.34*
Service Excellence	**6.03**	*5.02*	*1.01*
Student Centeredness	**6.12**	5.22	*0.90*

(**7** = very important / very satisfied **1** = not important / not satisfied at all)

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Analysis

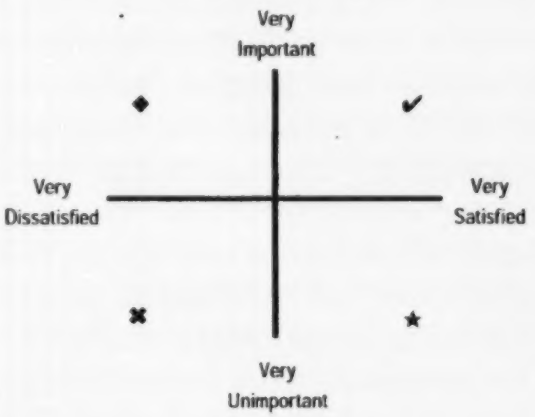
It is important that the analysis of the data includes all three areas of measurement — importance, satisfaction, and performance gap. Focusing on only one area, such as performance gap, is likely to result in overlooking areas of the campus experience that students value most. A combination of scores provides the most dynamic information for institutions to consider when developing an action agenda.

Using the matrix below permits the institution to conceptualize its student satisfaction data by retention priorities and marketing opportunities. In addition, it allows the institution to pinpoint areas where resources can be redirected from areas of low importance to areas of high importance.

Trend Analysis

The composite scales were analyzed to determine trends in importance, satisfaction and performance gap across the most recent five years of data. The comparisons on the following pages are presented separately by institutional type: four-year private, four-year public, and two-year community, junior, and technical institutions. Trend data are not provided for career and private schools because the career and private version of the SSI was first introduced in 1997. The data have been isolated by academic year, rather than presented cumulatively.

Matrix for Prioritizing Action



- ◆ **High importance / low satisfaction**
  pinpoints areas that should claim the institution's immediate attention, i.e. retention agenda / priorities
- ✔ **High importance / high satisfaction**
  showcases the institution's areas of strength that should be highlighted in promotional materials
- ✖ **Low importance / low satisfaction**
  presents an opportunity for the institution to examine those areas that have low status with students
- ★ **Low importance / high satisfaction**
  suggests areas from which it might be beneficial to redirect institutional resources to areas of higher importance

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Scales: Five-Year Trends at Four-Year Private Institutions

Scale	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Academic Advising					
Importance	6.30	6.32	6.29	6.27	6.28
Satisfaction	5.28	5.30	5.31	5.25	5.24
Performance Gap	1.02	1.02	0.98	1.02	1.04
Campus Climate					
Importance	6.16	6.18	6.17	6.15	6.14
Satisfaction	4.99	5.11	5.19	5.15	5.10
Performance Gap	1.17	1.07	0.98	1.00	1.04
Campus Life					
Importance	5.73	5.75	5.67	5.68	5.65
Satisfaction	4.61	4.74	4.77	4.76	4.70
Performance Gap	1.12	1.01	0.90	0.92	0.95
Campus Support Services					
Importance	6.03	6.04	6.03	6.03	6.03
Satisfaction	4.94	5.01	5.05	5.04	5.05
Performance Gap	1.09	1.03	0.98	0.99	0.98
Concern for Individual					
Importance	6.16	6.18	6.17	6.15	6.15
Satisfaction	5.05	5.14	5.18	5.12	5.08
Performance Gap	1.11	1.04	0.99	1.03	1.07
Instructional Effectiveness					
Importance	6.34	6.35	6.37	6.35	6.35
Satisfaction	5.22	5.27	5.35	5.28	5.24
Performance Gap	1.12	1.08	1.02	1.07	1.11
Recruitment and Financial Aid					
Importance	6.11	6.12	6.14	6.15	6.15
Satisfaction	4.73	4.85	4.88	4.90	4.82
Performance Gap	1.38	1.27	1.26	1.25	1.33
Registration Effectiveness					
Importance	6.12	6.13	6.15	6.14	6.16
Satisfaction	4.81	4.93	4.98	4.96	4.89
Performance Gap	1.31	1.20	1.17	1.18	1.27
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations					
Importance	---	---	---	---	---
Satisfaction	4.83	4.90	4.98	4.96	4.94
Performance Gap	---	---	---	---	---
Safety and Security					
Importance	6.16	6.16	6.18	6.17	6.18
Satisfaction	4.48	4.60	4.72	4.71	4.66
Performance Gap	1.68	1.56	1.46	1.46	1.52
Service Excellence					
Importance	6.03	6.04	6.01	6.01	6.00
Satisfaction	4.86	4.96	5.00	4.97	4.91
Performance Gap	1.17	1.08	1.01	1.04	1.09
Student Centeredness					
Importance	6.16	6.20	6.18	6.16	6.15
Satisfaction	5.08	5.22	5.28	5.24	5.19
Performance Gap	1.08	0.98	0.90	0.92	0.96

Student Records: n = 38,201 for 1995-96; n = 41,326 for 1996-97; n = 75,486 for 1997-98; n = 85,514 for 1998-99; n = 92,409 for 1999-2000

Scales: Five-Year Trends at Four-Year Public Institutions

Scale	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Academic Advising					
Importance	6.27	6.32	6.31	6.32	6.31
Satisfaction	4.93	4.94	5.09	5.05	5.14
Performance Gap	1.34	1.38	1.22	1.27	1.17
Campus Climate					
Importance	6.01	6.05	6.06	6.04	6.05
Satisfaction	4.97	4.73	4.87	4.91	4.92
Performance Gap	1.30	1.32	1.19	1.13	1.13
Campus Life					
Importance	5.50	5.56	5.60	5.57	5.60
Satisfaction	4.52	4.59	4.70	4.73	4.69
Performance Gap	0.98	0.97	0.90	0.84	0.91
Campus Support Services					
Importance	6.01	6.06	6.06	6.04	6.03
Satisfaction	4.84	4.85	4.96	5.02	5.04
Performance Gap	1.17	1.21	1.10	1.02	0.99
Concern for Individual					
Importance	6.04	6.07	6.07	6.06	6.05
Satisfaction	4.64	4.61	4.76	4.77	4.79
Performance Gap	1.40	1.46	1.31	1.29	1.26
Instructional Effectiveness					
Importance	6.29	6.32	6.31	6.31	6.30
Satisfaction	4.97	4.98	5.05	5.09	5.09
Performance Gap	1.32	1.34	1.26	1.22	1.21
Recruitment and Financial Aid					
Importance	5.96	6.02	6.01	6.01	6.00
Satisfaction	4.45	4.48	4.57	4.60	4.64
Performance Gap	1.51	1.54	1.44	1.41	1.36
Registration Effectiveness					
Importance	6.15	6.17	6.17	6.16	6.16
Satisfaction	4.63	4.67	4.74	4.80	4.80
Performance Gap	1.52	1.50	1.43	1.36	1.36
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations					
Importance	---	---	---	---	---
Satisfaction	4.84	4.81	4.86	4.92	4.90
Performance Gap	---	---	---	---	---
Safety and Security					
Importance	6.27	6.28	6.26	6.28	6.28
Satisfaction	4.29	4.22	4.33	4.38	4.30
Performance Gap	1.98	2.06	1.93	1.90	1.98
Service Excellence					
Importance	5.96	6.00	6.00	5.99	5.99
Satisfaction	4.57	4.58	4.71	4.70	4.73
Performance Gap	1.39	1.42	1.29	1.29	1.26
Student Centeredness					
Importance	5.97	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03
Satisfaction	4.72	4.75	4.91	4.94	4.93
Performance Gap	1.25	1.28	1.12	1.09	1.10

Student Records: n = 29,892 for 1995-96; n = 30,557 for 1996-97; n = 37,725 for 1997-98; n = 46,087 for 1998-99; n = 54,884 for 1999-20000

Scales: Five-Year Trends at Two-Year Institutions

Scale	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Academic Advising/Counseling					
Importance	6.13	6.10	6.11	6.11	6.08
Satisfaction	5.05	5.03	5.06	5.10	5.04
Performance Gap	1.08	1.07	1.05	1.01	1.04
Academic Services					
Importance	6.02	6.01	6.03	6.03	5.99
Satisfaction	5.04	5.03	5.16	5.23	5.18
Performance Gap	0.98	0.98	0.87	0.80	0.81
Admissions and Financial Aid					
Importance	6.00	5.98	5.96	5.98	5.94
Satisfaction	4.93	4.91	4.93	4.99	4.93
Performance Gap	1.07	1.07	1.03	0.99	1.01
Campus Climate					
Importance	5.96	5.94	5.94	5.94	5.90
Satisfaction	5.08	5.09	5.14	5.17	5.11
Performance Gap	0.88	0.85	0.80	0.77	0.79
Campus Support Services					
Importance	5.42	5.43	5.39	5.41	5.38
Satisfaction	4.72	4.75	4.77	4.84	4.79
Performance Gap	0.70	0.68	0.62	0.57	0.59
Concern for the Individual					
Importance	6.11	6.08	6.09	6.07	6.04
Satisfaction	5.06	5.04	5.11	5.12	5.06
Performance Gap	1.05	1.04	0.98	0.95	0.98
Instructional Effectiveness					
Importance	6.20	6.17	6.19	6.17	6.14
Satisfaction	5.25	5.25	5.30	5.30	5.24
Performance Gap	0.95	0.92	0.89	0.87	0.90
Registration Effectiveness					
Importance	6.15	6.13	6.14	6.14	6.10
Satisfaction	5.23	5.23	5.28	5.28	5.24
Performance Gap	0.92	0.90	0.86	0.86	0.86
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations					
Importance	---	---	---	---	---
Satisfaction	5.29	5.29	5.33	5.33	5.30
Performance Gap	---	---	---	---	---
Safety and Security					
Importance	5.98	5.96	5.99	5.98	5.94
Satisfaction	4.64	4.73	4.79	4.82	4.81
Performance Gap	1.34	1.23	1.20	1.16	1.13
Service Excellence					
Importance	5.93	5.90	5.92	5.92	5.88
Satisfaction	5.02	5.01	5.09	5.12	5.06
Performance Gap	0.91	0.89	0.83	0.80	0.82
Student Centeredness					
Importance	5.95	5.93	5.93	5.93	5.89
Satisfaction	5.16	5.15	5.21	5.23	5.18
Performance Gap	0.79	0.78	0.72	0.70	0.71

Student Records: n = 30,122 for 1995-96; n = 40,629 for 1996-97; n = 37,357 for 1997-98; n = 55,571 for 1998-99; n = 82,852 for 1999-2000

Uses of Satisfaction Data

The primary uses of the Student Satisfaction Inventory results continue to be developing awareness and readying campuses for institutional planning. Some specific uses cited by the 1,045 institutions currently using the SSI are as follows:

- Setting retention agenda
- Providing feedback to faculty
- Marketing the institution
- Providing feedback to staff
- Strategic planning
- Providing feedback to students
- Preparing self-study for accreditation
- Influencing budget decisions
- Enhancing total quality management
- Pinpointing the specific expectations of different ethnic groups
- Targeting specific needs of on-campus residents vs. commuters
- Providing direction to individual departments/majors/programs
- Determining the satisfaction levels of special populations, including nontraditional students, part-time students, and students with disabilities

Participating institutions report that a more complete view of their students' concerns enables them to achieve significant gains in their institution's effectiveness more quickly because they know precisely where—and where not—to focus their time, money, and effort. As many of these institutions have learned already, the results of the inventory serve as a blueprint for initiating change. The SSI data have allowed them to move ahead confidently, avoiding the mistake of relying on traditional, incomplete measures of student satisfaction.

Reasons for Surveying Annually

To get the most value from student satisfaction studies requires that institutions compare their students' perceptions over time. Therefore, more and more institutions are making the decision to survey their students on an annual basis in order to provide systematic and immediate feedback to their internal and external constituents on the effectiveness of all campus programs and services.

In addition, institutions report their primary reasons for assessing student satisfaction annually include:

- Establish annual local benchmarking of their own student population
- Track the impact of new initiatives on student satisfaction
- Identify new areas for further improvement, based on the concerns of the current student body
- Track expectations of students as they progress through class levels
- Identify current strengths for recruitment activities

Summary

Successful institutions tend to share three basic attributes: they focus on the needs of their students, they continually improve the quality of the educational experience, and they use student satisfaction assessment results to shape their future directions.

Making the decision to regularly assess student expectations and levels of satisfaction can provide institutions with the insurance policy they need to maintain their edge in the academic marketplace. Students whose needs are actively addressed by their institution are more likely to be successful in achieving their educational goals and more likely to persist — and ultimately become the institutions' best ambassadors and future benefactors.

For more information:

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The Student Satisfaction Inventory™ was authored by Laurie Schreiner, Ph.D., and Stephanie Juillerat, Ph.D. in 1993 and is published by USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc. The National Validation Study was completed by the authors in 1994 with the assistance of Noel-Levitz.

Also available:

- The 2000 National Student Satisfaction Report for four-year Canadian institutions
- The 2000 Adult Student Priorities Report

Contact Noel-Levitz to receive copies of these Spring 2000 pilot study reports.

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Sample Student Satisfaction Inventory Items

Importance to me... (1 = not important at all; 2 = not very important; 3 = somewhat unimportant; 4 = neutral; 5 = somewhat important; 6 = important; 7 = very important)		...My level of satisfaction (1 = not satisfied at all; 2 = not very satisfied; 3 = somewhat dissatisfied; 4 = neutral; 5 = somewhat satisfied; 6 = satisfied; 7 = very satisfied)		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	Students are made to feel welcome here.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	Faculty care about me as an individual.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	The campus is safe and secure for all students.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	The personnel involved in registration are helpful.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	My academic advisor is approachable.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	The content of the courses within my major is valuable. *(four-year version only)*	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	Internships or practical experiences are provided in my degree/certificate program. *(two-year version only)*	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		
① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤	Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable. *(four-year version only)*	① ≠ ③ ④ ∞ ± ≤		

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